

State of Alaska FY2007 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Health and Social Services Subsidized Adoptions & Guardianship Component Budget Summary

Component: Subsidized Adoptions & Guardianship

Contribution to Department's Mission

The Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program facilitates permanent placements in adoptive homes or stable guardianships for the increasing number of children in state custody whose special needs make them hard-to-place. Adoption is viewed as the most permanent placement for a child and is therefore generally the preferable option.

Guardianships are considered for children who cannot be freed for adoption, but for whom a reasonably permanent home can be provided through guardianship. This is often the best choice for children who cannot live with their parents but continue to have an important emotional tie with their families that should not be severed.

Core Services

This component provides a permanent home to children that are in the permanent custody of the State and who are unlikely to be adopted without a subsidy. These are children that have been removed from situations of abuse or neglect and that have physical, mental or emotional disturbances which place them at high risk for subsequent abuse or neglect. The adoption or guardianship subsidy covers the costs for the child's special needs and is available to the family until the child reaches age 18.

This component's efforts also focus on permanency needs that include four deliverables: recruitment of homes for children who do not already have permanent homes; home studies on potential adoptive families; pre-adoption services for the child and family; and post-adoption services for up to one year after the final adoption or guardianship court hearing.

As of September 2005, there were 2,098 continuing adoptions and 235 new adoptions in Alaska's adoption pipeline.

FY2007 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results

FY2007 Component Budget: \$21,688,900	Personnel:	
	Full time	0
	Part time	0
	Total	0

Key Component Challenges

Address the High Number of Beneficiaries to be Served: When children leave foster care, their special needs are reassessed to determine whether they will continue to need assistance through the Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program. Approximately 95 percent of children exiting custody have special needs and continue to receive state benefits.

The Division has recognized for some time now that the level of disturbance and complexity of problems for children in custody is increasing. These factors make it difficult to find permanent adoptive or guardianship homes without a subsidy. It is preferable that the state provides a means for children to be given a permanent home with state funding than for the state to continue to be completely responsible for the child.

Increased Post Adoptive Services (PAS): Approximately 2,100 children are living in permanent homes provided under the Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program. Alaska experiences approximately 75 unsuccessful adoptions annually for a multitude of reasons. While most adoptions have positive outcomes for children and families, many families need supportive services during some part of their child's development. Adoptive families, in particular, undergo

enormous struggles and face serious barriers in obtaining the help they may need to succeed. PAS programs focus on preserving adoptive families by reducing the number of unsuccessful adoptions through provision of services such as referrals to available community resources, training, assessments, assistance in interpreting clinical information for children with special needs, counseling, and crisis intervention.

Current services do not meet the PAS needs of adoptive and guardianship families, especially in rural areas where approximately 40 percent of Alaska's failed adoptions and guardianships occur. OCS has requested legislative support through appropriated funds that will allow for increases to the existing level of support services available. Successful adoption, the desired outcome, could mean the difference between a child becoming a productive citizen or remaining in the social services system throughout the remainder of their lives.

Resource Family Recruitment: Continued efforts to recruit adoptive families that reflect ethnic and racial diversity of the children served by the OCS.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2007

Work with the Court System through the Court Improvement Project (CIP) to Expedite Permanency – CIP has determined the Courtview case management system has the capacity to record and measure timeliness of permanency hearings. A report will be written that measures the timeliness of hearings and a plan for decreasing any identified delays. The CIP has also requested that the Alaska Supreme Court consider amendments to CINA Rule 17.2 that would prohibit granting of continuances in permanency hearings except upon showing of good cause.

Improving the process of licensing foster and adoptive homes will result in better matches of foster parents to the children needing placement in a safe and supportive home and adoptive parents to the children moved to permanency.

Post Adoptive Services programs that focus on preserving adoptive families will result in a decrease in the number of failed adoptions and guardianships. PAS programs reduce the number of unsuccessful adoptions through referrals to available community resources, training, assessments, assistance in interpreting clinical information for children with special needs, counseling, and crisis intervention.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2005

The Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program provided permanent homes for 202 adopted children and guardianships for 33 children that were in the permanent custody of the state. This represents an FY 2004 to FY 2005 growth rate of approximately 4 percent, far below the double digit growth experienced from FY 1999 through FY 2002.

Home Study Services: Two contractors provided home study services to families who want to adopt children in the state's custody.

Resource Family Assessments: The OCS initiated a new and improved process for screening potential foster parents, relative caregivers, and adoptive parents. The Resource Family selection process improves the safety of children in care, streamlines procedures, avoids delays, and minimizes the number of moves a child may have to make. The overall result is better placement options for children and improved relations with our resource families.

New Regulations: The OCS developed new regulations on adoption subsidy processes and fair hearing process appeals effective April, 2005.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

AS 25.23	Adoption
AS 25.23.190-240	Subsidy for hard-to-place child
AS 47.10.080	Judgments and orders
7 AAC 53 Article 2	Subsidized Adoption and Subsidized Guardianship Payments
Title IV-E of the Social Security Act	

Contact Information

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Subsidized Adoptions & Guardianship Component Financial Summary

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2005 Actuals	FY2006 Management Plan	FY2007 Governor
Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0
72000 Travel	21.2	0.0	0.0
73000 Services	610.3	798.8	1,176.1
74000 Commodities	0.0	0.0	0.0
75000 Capital Outlay	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Benefits	17,960.0	20,512.8	20,512.8
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	18,591.5	21,311.6	21,688.9
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	6,746.8	11,265.7	11,410.9
1003 General Fund Match	3,152.0	3,284.2	3,429.4
1004 General Fund Receipts	8,692.7	6,761.7	6,848.6
Funding Totals	18,591.5	21,311.6	21,688.9

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2005 Actuals	FY2006 Management Plan	FY2007 Governor
Unrestricted Revenues				
None.		0.0	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		0.0	0.0	0.0
Restricted Revenues				
Federal Receipts	51010	6,746.8	11,265.7	11,410.9
Restricted Total		6,746.8	11,265.7	11,410.9
Total Estimated Revenues		6,746.8	11,265.7	11,410.9

**Summary of Component Budget Changes
From FY2006 Management Plan to FY2007 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2006 Management Plan	10,045.9	11,265.7	0.0	21,311.6
Proposed budget increases:				
-Enhanced Post-Adoptive Services	140.3	89.7	0.0	230.0
-Expand Adoption and Guardianship Homestudy Contract	91.8	55.5	0.0	147.3
FY2007 Governor	10,278.0	11,410.9	0.0	21,688.9